

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 21, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Thumbscrew actuating mechanism 40 ~~41~~ is located rearwardly of channels 36, 38, near the mid-point of the upper and lower jaw portions 14, 16. As can be seen, this includes a threaded shaft 42 that passes through a cooperating bore 44 in the upper jaw portion 14, and which has a threaded lower end 46 which engages a corresponding threaded bore 48 in the lower jaw portion 16. A knob portion 50 having a projecting flange 52 is mounted to the upper end of shaft 42 for manual rotation of the thumbscrew, as between the thumb and forefinger of an operator's hand.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 32, with the following rewritten paragraph:

FIG. 6 provides partial view of a clip assembly 100 in accordance with an embodiment of the invention having another version of thumbscrew mechanism 102. As can be seen, this mechanism includes a unitary bolt having a threaded shaft 104 that engages a corresponding threaded bore 106 in the upper jaw portion 14. A flange portion 108 is formed on the upper end of the bolt, while the unthreaded lower end 110 of the bolt passes through a cooperating bore ~~122~~ 112 in lower jaw portion 16. A hub or boss 114 is mounted on the lower end of a shaft, and is received for rotation in a corresponding socket 116 that is formed in the bottom of the lower jaw portion 16. Thus, in response to rotation of the flange portion 108, the threaded shaft and bore cooperate to drive the upper jaw portion flange downwardly, while the rotating hub 114 reacts against socket 116 to draw the lower jaw portion upwardly in the opposite direction, thereby generating the gripping action between the two jaw portions.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 21, with the following rewritten paragraph:

As can be seen, the ridges and valleys preferably have a rounded (e.g., undulating or sinusoidal) contour, rather than a sharp-edged profile. As compared with sharp-edged teeth, this arrangement has the advantage of minimizing damage to the fibers or other material of the tarp that is gripped therein, which in turn allows higher engagement pressures to be exerted (as by tightening the adjustment knob) without fear of damaging the tarp. The ridges/valleys are preferably provided with surface texturing for enhancing their grip against the sheet material of the tarp. Suitably, this can be in the form of a multiplicity of raised protrusions or "bumps" 136, giving the surface texturing a grainy consistency somewhat like that of coarse sandpaper. It will be understood, however, that the surface texturing may have other consistencies and may also have other forms, such as a knurled or crosshatched pattern or a multiplicity of small ridges, for example; moreover, the surface texturing may be distributed over the entire engagement surface of the jaw portion as shown in FIG. 7, or may be confined to particular contact areas, such as the tops of the ridges and bottoms of the valleys, for example. Still further, although ridges having rounded profiles are generally preferred, it will be understood that sharp-edged ridges may be used in some embodiments.